OCT 29 1909

The Black Cat

NOVEMBER 1909

Michael Coffin
Charles Gibbs

The Disappearance of Baldy Fadden
Clarence L. Hay

When Hape Went East
F. Roney Weir

The Battle of Warragul Plain
James Francis Dwyer

A Materializing Turk
Meyram Hill

The Cross of Chivalry
Alfred B. Osgoodby

Between Darkness and Dawn
Florence Olmstead

The Bandit and the Baby
Arthur R. Andre

Ten Cents

Vol. XV., No. 2. Whole No. 170. Copyright, 1909, by The Shortstory Publishing Company

THE SHORTSTORY PUBLISHING COMPANY 41-47 Pearl Street, Boston, Massachusetts
186 Oxford Street, London, W., England

I help make things bright, and with Sapolio it's just as e a s y

SAPOLIO

CLEANS SCOURS POLISHES

WORKS WITHOUT WASTE

195104

The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

Copyright, 1909, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Vol. XV., No. 2.
Whole No., 170.

NOVEMBER, 1909.

10 cents a copy
$1.00 a year.

Entered at the Post-Office at Boston, Mass., as second-class matter.

THE BLACK CAT is devoted to original, unusual, fascinating stories—every number is complete in itself. It publishes no serials, translations, borrowings, or stealings. It pays nothing for the name or reputation of a writer, but the highest price on record for *Stories that are Stories*, and it pays not according to length, but according to strength. To receive attention, manuscripts must be sent flat, fully prepaid, and accompanied by addressed and stamped envelope for return. All MSS. are received and returned at their writers' risk.

CAUTION. — *The entire contents of* THE BLACK CAT *are protected by copyright, and publishers everywhere are cautioned against reproducing any of the matter, either wholly or in part.*

Michael Coffin.*

BY CHARLES GIBBS.

HEN the mothers on the heel of Cape Cod say to their children: "Go to bed now, Michael Coffin is abroad," they innocently perpetuate a name once famous on the coast of Massachusetts. Ask them who Michael Coffin was, and they will shake their heads. Strange this, too, for the hand of legend has painted certain shadows of Michael's life with such emphasis, that he, of all men, should have survived clearly in the popular mind. "Michael Coffin," however, has become a mere threat, or danger-signal.

Even in his own day, Coffin was but little understood, and the harbormaster of Caldron, who, by common consent, was endowed with more wisdom than other men, answered questions in ways hardly satisfying to those that asked them. Indeed, when hard driven, Dan Veeder would abruptly close the subject by an apt quotation: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing."

Abruptness, however, gave Dan only temporary relief. Sooner or later, a small red flag would be hoisted on Nonamasset, and would struggle in the breeze, like a wild bird trying to free itself. Sooner or later, the storm-signal on the island would be seen on shore, and would, within an hour, become the only topic of conversation.

*Copyright, 1909, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

It was then that the same questions which had been discussed and debated for nearly twenty years, again became living issues in the town of Caldron. How could Coffin know? By what strange power was he able to sense, before all others, the approach of "weather." Why should one possessed of this all but miraculous gift shun the society of his fellow-men, and live in a shack between two hummocks on a barren island? Why did he not explain his gift, spread it, and hand on the power, which in his own hands had worked so much of good.

These were the questions, but the answers to them remained unknown. Twice, at least, men had essayed to force them, but something in Michael's eye had warned one that he must never try again; a blow from his mighty fist had silenced the other so completely, that further details of the interview never came to light. The mystery persisted, and Michael came to be regarded as one in league with higher powers for the purpose of fulfiling some mission which it was not for the ignorant to question or pry into.

Whether he had come in response to the call of fate or not, the remarkable secret that became known after the wreck of the schooner *Falcon* off Point Pensance, certainly showed that fate itself had been at the helm of Michael's life, and had steered him into the channel which of all others he wished most to follow.

On this occasion, the red flag had again been hoisted on the island, and before sunset, had begun to whip and lash itself to shreds in the rising wind. From Buzzard's Bay into Vineyard Sound the tide swept through the narrow channel between Nonamasset and Devil's Foot Island. So madly did the water shoot through this nozzle or "hole," as the capemen call it, that the can buoys were drawn under, and the chained spars, which had stood erect at slack tide, ten feet above the level, lay horizontally below the surface. The same rocks, which to-day persuade money-wise insurance companies to forbid all traffic during heavy fogs, lurked, like savage beasts, in wait for prey.

Eastward, the channel was pouring its flood into the fathomless whirlpool or caldron, where a mad merry-go-round was boiling relentlessly, and drawing into its eddying centre, the flotsam from the bay, and the foam from the rock-bound hole.

By night-fall, heavily laden cumuli had fatefully blackened until they hung like a sentence of death over the entire bay and sound. Veeder, whose official capacity rendered him in a measure responsible for what might befall in the harbor under his jurisdiction, did not sleep soundly that night. Instead he peered anxiously out of his bedroom window whenever a cat-flaw spent itself against the side of his house. Once or twice, he scanned the west from his rear stoop where the wind struck him with the force of a flying solid. Now and again, the sky was offset in all its virulence by forks of lightning that leaped like the hands of a pianist, and brought forth titanic crashes that outranked all other noises of the night. At times, sounds, less loud, but well known to Veeder, and infinitely more terrifying than the storm itself, could be distinctly heard in the caldron, sounds like human cries. On nights like this, the whirlpool seemed peopled with a mad crew who had drugged their reason, and howled in hideous discord. Often the many-tongued mob would subside while some one voice, over-topping all, would invoke the rest to let loose with the next flaw, more fiendishly even than before.

Men said that the caldron "talked," but indeed it would have been more accurate had they said it bawled. Accuracy of description however, could give no clew to these ghastly sounds. Was it the wind? Some answered yes, whereas others traced the talk to the bursting of huge bubbles of air. The Portuguese had their own view of the matter, and believed that the spirits of all who had ever been drowned in the whirlpool, rose to the surface whenever the caldron was sufficiently stirred. It is of no consequence now to inquire which of these theories was the most plausible, but it is important to know that the thing they were invented to explain had bewildered and unnerved men who in all their lives had never before known fear.

It was well after midnight, when the harbormaster was suddenly startled by violent pounding at his door, and as he opened it, a man, wet, panting, and but partially clothed, stumbled into the hall.

He was off the *Falcon,* he said, bound for Vineyard Haven. Captain Silvius, long before the storm broke, had suddenly, and

unaccountably, decided on the ocean passage, but before he had time to round the islands, had been forced to cast anchor in the lee of Great Naushon.

"She dragged, drifted onto the Devil's Shoulder, and stove in her sides! Both masts snapped when she struck!"

"Why didn't he go ashore?" Veeder asked.

"Lost his head," the man cried; ordered the dory out; kept off shore; drifted through the hole, and shot into the caldron!"

"And then?"

"And then?" the man echoed with the look of one who had just gazed death squarely between the eyes. "Then happened what no man ever heard or saw! We struck some driftwood in the centre of the pool, and all of a sudden, with a wild shriek, a man caught hold the gunwale amidships. He talked and cried like a maniac, all the while slipping hand over hand astern. Then he stopped, hesitated a second, and with a savage yell, let out: 'Good God, It's Silvius!'

"Before we knew what he was doing, he grabbed a boat-hook and jammed the point into the captain's neck! I lunged at him with the oar, but he dodged under and I fell, capsizing the boat. God only knows what's become of 'em."

The next morning Veeder and the refugee set out to inspect the wreck. The wind had moderated, and a sky, practically cloudless, except for a few trailors hurrying to catch up with the main procession, greeted the eye. Along shore, children were searching out the treasures of the stranded gulfweed, while their fathers washed decks, coiled ropes, and half hoisted sails to crackle in the breeze, and dry.

The harbormaster and his man followed the south shore of Pensance, but when nearly at the point, came to a sudden stop over the body of a man wedged face downward between two boulders half under water. Horror-stricken, they carried him to a strip of dry sand, where the unexpected sight of two lobsters that had fallen with a half-metallic thud, and were struggling over a strip of skin, so unnerved the men that the body slipped from their hold.

Carefully, they turned the corpse over where it lay. Face and neck were mutilated beyond recognition. Curiously, the

left hand, tightly balled and bloody, clutched something which fell into the sand only after the thumb and index finger had been forced apart by means of a pointed rock. Veeder examined the thing, and discovered to his amazement, a gold pendant, whose sharp points had cut into the flesh. He rubbed the trinket in sand and water, and when its details emerged, was startled by this engraving:

"Miriam Howe Coffin"

Instantly, Veeder ordered the man to stand sentinel over the corpse, while without delay he himself secured a skiff, and alone rowed over to Nonamasset. Landing at Coffin's Cove, he walked rapidly up the gully toward the shack.

A hasty survey confirmed Veeder's suspicions, and also drew his attention to a book lying open, as Coffin had left it, on a small mahogany table. "So please you God!" was written boldly across the middle of the left-hand page. Turning to the beginning of what was evidently the last record, he found on the third preceding page another, "So please you God!" and working backward through the unnumbered and undated leaves, he discovered that each entry was separated from the one preceding and the one following, by "So please you God!"

Turning excitedly now to the beginning of the last record, Veeder read: "How often has all that is in my mind now, been there before! How often have I written these words! O God! You know, and knowing that you know, I come to you with courage and hope, and tell you everything. You know what I am. You made me what I am, and I can talk to you as one straight man to another. Why send the tempest? Why tell me about it? Can't you let me sleep? Paralyze me, but don't send the old madness! When you act like this, I'm like a drunken man who knows he's drunk. I'm rational; I believe in you, but I can't help doing what you make me do. Why don't you leave me alone! What's the good of trying to save them through me, when as soon as the tempest's started, you fill me with hatred? What's the good of prayers? I'm going back to Miriam; back to the *Albatross;* back to Pensance when all were lost but Silvius and me. What did you keep him for? What did you keep me for?

Did you keep me so that forever after I might be weather-wise, might sense the tempest, and might forwarn all men, or did you keep me to remember Silvius; to remember how he fought her off when she caught hold the hatch he was on? You knew she had a child, didn't you? And you saw him dig his boots into her fingers, didn't you? And you had me snarled in the rigging, cutting and tearing my way through to help her, and you didn't let go till it was too late!

"Wasn't that enough? Are you keeping me to go mad again with the memory of it? Are you churning up your caldron to watch me mad with hate, mad with all the strength of my brute body and soul, mad, mad? To watch me plunge into your hell, plunge into it headlong, fighting against your wind, and strangling in your brine, looking for her, and looking for him? Why do you make me think I can find her? Why do you make me think I can find him? If I do, I'll kill him for you! You've saved him to kill, I know it. Your book says you're square. I'd blow out my brains if I didn't think you were keeping me for a purpose, but God Almighty, if you can see your way clear, let this be my last tempest, for Christ's sake don't keep me any longer, let me die.

"So please you God!"

The Disappearance of Baldy Fadden.*

BY CLARENCE L. HAY.

HE most important person on Hester Street was "Baldy Fadden," but "Baldy" was not aware of the high esteem in which he was held. His inability to estimate his own importance resulted from a lack of years. He was but four, and at that interesting period of life one is not able to recognize his status in the community.

"Baldy Fadden's" baptismal name was Maritonio Garibaldi Caparelli, and his father was a unit in that army of useful persons who struggle bravely to keep the streets of New York in a sanitary condition. The name was a large mouthful for the East-side dwellers who became early interested in the life of Caparelli, junior. They tried to abbreviate Maritonio, but found that the only possible abbreviation, "Mary," was not a fitting title for the sturdy boy. The second name, Garibaldi, was likewise cumbersome, and while the sportive youth of Hester Street tried to solve the difficulty, an ex-pugilist suggested the name of "Baldy Fadden." The suggestion was received with acclamation, Maritonio Garibaldi was swept out of existence, and "Baldy Fadden" took his place.

And the name fitted the youthful Caparelli like the little blue overalls that he wore. He was a curly-headed, likeable youngster, and the inhabitants of Hester Street, having acted as a collective godfather, did not allow their interest to relax as he grew older. "Baldy" was as well known as the Tammany representative, and the elder Caparelli, softened by the affection shown to his son, smothered the resentment he had exhibited towards the nickname and delighted Hester Street by adopting it for his own purposes.

It was on one day in early spring that "Baldy Fadden" surprised Hester Street, and made its mixed population use up all the expressions of astonishment they knew. "Baldy" disap-

* Copyright, 1909, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

peared! It was not a common disappearance resorted to by the ordinary child who wishes to make its parents familiar with the agony produced by a temporary parting; it was a startling, mysterious disappearance, that stirred the East side from the "Panhandle" to "Hell's Kitchen."

The Caparellis occupied a front apartment on the fourth floor of a tenement house, and on the morning of the mysterious disappearance Mrs. Caparelli placed her son on the little iron fire balcony overhanging the street. The balcony was but four feet long and two wide, with a railing that was twice the height of Caparelli, junior, and it had neither trap nor ladder. The only means of reaching it was by way of the window in the Caparelli apartment, and as the lower apartments had fire-escapes opening on the back of the building, there was a clear drop of forty-five feet to the street below. The windows of the room on either side were six feet away, while the Caparelli flat, being on the top floor, was not overlooked by any other apartment, but had above it the sky and the shining sun which Mrs. Caparelli thought "Baldy" would enjoy. Having explained "Baldy's" utter aloofness from the world in general on that particular morning, we can proceed with the story:

Mrs. Caparelli placed her son on the balcony at five minutes past nine, and then, retiring to the room, stood for exactly five minutes thinking over some domestic problem before taking a look at her offspring. The mystery was evolved at the moment she looked. "Baldy Fadden" had disappeared!

The first and only thought which leapt with stunning force into the mind of the woman compelled her to spring to the railing and stare with wild eyes into the street beneath. But there was no commotion such as her imagination had pictured. Everything was peaceful. Half a dozen loafers stood around unconcernedly in front of Mulligan's saloon; Pietro and Baptisto, the fruiterers next door, were standing chatting on the sidewalk, while the vendor of pop-corn, standing nearly underneath the Caparelli apartment, yawned lazily as he stared at the passers-by. Furthermore, there was no trace of "Baldy Fadden," alive or dead, on the street or sidewalk.

The woman, frantic with apprehension, screamed out a tor-

rent of questions to the men on the street, but they signified in a dozen different ways that they were ignorant of the whereabouts of her son. The frightened mother gazed hopelessly up and around, and then, recognizing how utterly impossible it would be for "Baldy" to leave the balcony in any other way, she shrieked again and again, and Hester Street arose to wrestle with the mystery with all the vociferous jabbering that a street containing thirty-seven different nationalities can bring to bear upon such an occasion.

Unless "Baldy" had suddenly grown wings and flown into space, there were but four ways to account for his disappearance: The first and, of course, the most probable, was the theory that he had fallen into the street, but the evidence of twenty-five people, who were in different positions in front of the apartment house, swept the surmise to the scrap heap of knocked-out suppositions. The peanut vendor offered to stake his immortal soul against ten cents' worth of nuts to prove that nothing had fallen from the Caparelli apartment, and the huge volume of supporting evidence, added to the fact that there were no parts of "Baldy" visible, or no signs to prove that he had struck the street in a forcible manner, proved that the peanut vendor was not reckless in wagering his soul against a quart of nuts.

The suggestion that some one, standing at a near-by window, might have hooked "Baldy" by means of a long pole was also scouted, when the residents of the flats to the left and right had been examined. A cousin of the Caparellis who, while admitting that she had seen "Baldy" on the balcony, was above suspicion, lived to the right, and a brother workman of "Baldy's" father resided on the left. His reputation was unimpeachable. The roof was now the only place to look for traces of kidnapping, but the roof offered no solution to the growing mystery. The janitor had not unlocked the trap door up to the time that "Baldy" had disappeared, and, on either side, the roof of the house was inaccessible except by means of ladders and ropes, and regarding these there was not the slightest trace to prove that they had been used. The mystery was stupendous.

At ten o'clock five detectives of the Italian squad, who thought they detected the work of the "Black Hand," were busy on the

spot. Eleven policemen wrestled with the crowd and clues in turn, and Mrs. Caparelli, in between numerous hysterical fits, gave interviews to thirteen different newspaper men, who photographed the wonderful balcony and then rushed away with the news. For the unexplainable and the unaccountable is always news. If "Baldy" had been smashed up on the street like hundreds of other East-side children, the incident would have been of only paragraph value, but the fact that he had left the balcony by ways and means that suggested the supernatural made the disappearance of great news value in a dull season. "Baldy Fadden" appeared in letters five inches long, and a special spook writer, who had just contributed a series of articles to a leading magazine, was employed by one yellow sheet to searchlight the mystery.

Two hours after the disappearance Hester Street was blocked to traffic. Ten thousand theories had been advanced up to that time. It was suggested that "Baldy" had been hooked by the trailing anchor of an airship, that he had been grabbed by an eagle, or had been consumed by spontaneous combustion. Suppositions didn't end there. A man suggested that "Baldy" had suddenly developed the alleged gift of the wise men of the Yaquis and walked away on the atmosphere. Others hinted darkly at the mysterious powers possessed by a withered lady from Lombardy who resided across the street, while many more muttered prayers and called upon patron saints to protect them from the devil, whose finger, they clearly perceived, was in the pie.

The thing was incomprehensible. From a small balcony, forty-five feet above the ground, in one of the most thickly populated districts in the world, a child had been spirited away right from under his mother's eyes, and five detectives, eleven policemen, three spook authorities, and three thousand people were unable to tell how the thing had been done. The disappearance of "Baldy Fadden" threatened to become one of the mysteries of the century, and in the cars it took precedence of politics and stock jobbing, while the doings of the "Giants" and the "Sox" were forgotten in the babble of conjecture.

As it oftens happens in cases of the kind, Caparelli senior was saved much of the anguish that the disappearance of the

boy brought to his wife. A messenger had been despatched to acquaint the father, after investigation had proved that "Baldy" was not on or around the home reservation, but it happened to be one of those days when fool things happen one after the other. Caparelli, senior, had been transferred from his regular gang that morning, and had been sent out to the Bronx to assist on a dump. The messenger was an Italian new to the city, and not having any money in his possession at the moment he ran to acquaint his countryman of the misfortune, and, furthermore, laboring under the idea that the Bronx was but a few hundred yards away, he started to walk. While he was plugging gallantly northward the mystery in Hester Street was deepening, and Caparelli, senior, was busily engaged shovelling refuse of various kinds that was being dumped into the pit.

At five o'clock in the evening Hester Street was a seething mass of eager-eyed, excited people waiting in an atmosphere charged with mystery. The day, that had opened brightly, had turned dull and heavy, and on the minds of people born in Southern Europe the unaccountable disappearance of "Baldy Fadden" worked like mental yeast in rising all the terrors of the past from dark corners of their brains.

It was half past five when the first illuminating ray pierced the gloom surrounding the happening. Baptisto, who owned the fruit shop to the right of the Caparelli apartment house, dashed through the crowd that struggled on the stairway, and shouted a message over the heads of the women sympathizing with the mother of the lost boy.

"Caparelli!" he screamed. "Caparelli! Ah, Mother of God! Caparelli has the child! He has him! Ah, it is good, good! Caparelli just telephoned that he has 'Baldy!' Ah, it is good! He has him at de dump away out — out, ah yes — out at de Bronx!"

After screaming out the message he fainted in the hallway, but upon being brought round, he repeated the astonishing information. Caparelli, senior, had spoken to him over the 'phone from a rubbish pit far out in the Bronx, and asked him to inform Mrs. Caparelli that the child was safe, and that he, Caparelli, was then on his way home with the lost one.

Hester Street gasped. The mystery was not yet explained — it had deepened. What devilish agency had spirited the child away from his mother to the place his father was working? Pious Italians muttered their prayers as they waited for the explanation that would be forthcoming.

Caparelli's arrival was something that will be long remembered on the East side. With "Baldy Fadden" on his shoulders he walked through a crowd of cheering, shouting people till he placed the boy in his mother's arms. Hester Street wept. Excited women waved table-cloths from the windows, and men howled with joy.

Then curiosity grasped the crowd with a clutch of iron. The mob swept around Caparelli, shrieking for explanations. They screamed their questions in a score of tongues, and pushed madly behind the laborer in their wild pursuit of knowledge.

Caparelli turned and put up his hand.

"Dere is leetle to tell," he said, quietly. "I see it all an' I tank de good Lord. 'Baldy' has told me dat he was on de balcony, yes, eet is so. 'Baldy' was dere, an' underneat', ah, I tank de good God, was de truck loading up de rotten bananas dat Baptisto sends to de dump. Ah, you see it now! 'Baldy' fell into de rotten bananas an' sink down in dem. You understan'? No one see him, an' when he fall de driver whip up his horse an' not seein' 'Baldy,' drive my boy all de way out to de dump where I was work. Ah, when I see my boy tipped out at my feet I tink him dead! I cry an' I cry again, but he was only stunned an' — an' — "

Hester Street drowned his sobs with a cheer that went rushing away up towards Chinatown. When it had died away, a shrill voice broke the silence with a yell of: "Churnal! Churnal! Orl about the finding of 'Baldy Fadden.'"

But the article by the spook authority that had appeared in the earlier editions had been cut out. The banana truck had outed the spooks in the last round.

When Hape Went East.*

BY F. RONEY WEIR.

OU orghter start to-morrow mornin', Hape," Old Winn was the most excited person in the room.

"To-morrow mornin'! You'd orghter — jest read that there last paragraph agin — or read the hull letter."

Hape Storner drew the little coal-oil lamp a bit nearer, and turned up the wick with trembling fingers. His eyesight was not so good as it had been when he was younger.

The little room was quite full. There were old man Winn, and Sam Winn, his son; and Sam's wife and the two boys, and Julia Haggins, a slender, red-haired woman of uncertain age and timid bearing, who cooked for the shingle-camp close by.

Mrs. Winn occupied the rocking-chair, and spread her feet far apart as she bumped back and forth. Julia Haggins, the cook, shrank far back in a shadowy corner, with an arm around one of the dogs.

Hape cleared his throat and began:

"'My Dear Nephew:—'"

"Say," interrupted old Winn, "what is your real name? What does 'Hape' stand fur?"

"I don't know," answered Hape. "Aunt Henry don't say in this letter. If you want to hear what she does say, make that boy quit teasin' the dog and set up and listen.

"'My Dear Nephew:— I am on my dying bed, and want that you should come home. The doctor says I have got — 'ah,— ah — (well, I can't just make out what she's got). 'He says it's liable to turn into'— (hum —) 'into' er — ah — (well it's that same thing that we couldn't make out before) 'and he says if it does turn into — s — p — g — u —(well, it's something pretty bad.

* Copyright, 1909, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

I should judge) ' he says if it turns into —' (that) ' I can't never git up. Now, my dear nephew, I have no living relation in the world except you. The farm here is worth about eighteen thousand dollars, to say nothing of the five head of horses, thirteen cows, about a hundred hens, ten hogs, and the piano. If you are a mind to come along home and see me through, every thread of it goes to you. But I ain't going to have your uncle's property, that he worked so hard for, took out West and scattered all over the Pacific Coast. If you git it you've got to sell out whatever you've got out there and come along home where you belong and stay here. You remember Brother Harkins, don't you? Well, his daughter, Pearl Alleen, would make you a splendid wife, and she would be glad of the piano. She ain't got a piano, and she plays beautiful. Hoping to hear from you soon, I am your loving Aunt Henry Batterson.' "

" I jing! About twenty-five thousand dollars!" exclaimed old Winn. " You must start to-morrow!"

" I can't start to-morrow."

" Why not, I'd like to know? S'pose the old lady dies afore you git there?"

" I've got to fix things up here before I go, ain't I?"

" Fix things up here!" cried old Winn in disgust, " Why, man alive, what do these things here amount to beside twenty-five thousand dollars? Tell yeh what we'll do. Sam'n, M'liss'n the boys'n me, we'll move right in here; and when I git my pension raised I'll take holt an' buy the place (shet up, you darn fice) " this last to one of the dogs, who had sent forth a long howl as if in protest against old man Winn's occupancy of its master's home.

Hape began to stir about his small room nervously. He would have paced the floor if there had been any floor to spare. But the sprawling boys and dogs quite monopolized the space.

" We'd better move right in to-morrow," suggested old Winn.

" Move right in?" repeated Hape, turning rather stormily. " What you got to buy a place with, Chet Winn, or what'll you ever have?"

The old man was a bit flustered for a moment, but recovered himself.

" What do you call this place worth, Hape?"

"Well, there's ten acres grubbed — not a stick nor a stone on it —"

"Yeh — say about a thousand dollars. A thousand dollars would be counted big for ten acres out here and you know it."

"It's plenty," admitted Hape. "And then there's ten more slashed and burned —"

"Five hundred," counted old Winn. "You can't in justice ask more'n five hundred fur them ten acres, Hape, an' that's countin' big — you know it is."

"And the house —"

"Well, three hundred would cover the house, and the cow an' the chickens, and the whole contraption, wouldn't it? Now, Hape, a man that's worth twenty-five thousand dollars in cold cash, that would worry a friend for eighteen hundred —"

He paused to let the significance of the picture sink into the mind of Hape Storner. "Now what would you think of such a man?"

Mrs. Winn, the old man's daughter-in-law, shuffled her feet and drew her shawl over her head. "Come awn; le's go home!" she grumbled. "It's gittin' awn to nine o'clock, an' the ceauw ain't ben milked yet; come awn!"

Old man Winn paused to press his argument home. "Why, Hape Storner, if it was me, and my old aunt that I thought so much of —"

"I never thought much of Aunt Henry Batterson," declared Hape. "I never seen her but once or twice in my life. We lived in Hope and she lived in Brandon!"

"Don't make no difference, Hape Storner, she thinks a lot of you, if you don't of her. She's a dyin', and she's promised to leave you a fortune if you'll jest go to it. You take my advice and make the gravel fly to-morrer. Come on, boys; come on, M'liss, we'd better go home now, but we'll be over to-morrer early and we'll begin to move right in."

The Winn procession, headed by Malissa, was disappearing in the clearing as the old man called back, "We'll see yeh early to-morrer mornin'," then stumbled along after his retreating family.

"Going down the river trail?" asked Hape of the tall woman who stood fondling the dogs.

"I thought I would; it's shorter than way round by the Winn's."

The big Danny dog leaned lackadaisically against her skirts, while the dog Roxy capered in front. The man regarded the group with gloomy eyes. It was very quiet in the back yard now that the Winns were gone. Just the gurgle of the near-by river, and the panting and clawing of the Foxy dog.

"They're affectionate critters," said Hape, at last.

"Ain't they?" cried the woman, enthusiastically.

"That's the worst of pulling up," said Hape. "What's to become of the dogs? Them Winn boys are about as tough on live animals as boys can be."

"They're awful tough boys," admitted the woman. "I saw 'em shooting chipmunks the other day just for sport — no good — a dead chipmunk ain't. A squirrel, now — of course folks have to shoot things that's good to eat, but I don't like to see little live things die for nothing."

"I s'pose you couldn't take one of the dogs, could you, Julia?"

The woman looked troubled. "I would in a minute, Hape, if I had a decent place to keep it in; but you know what kind of a life it would lead at the mill — men all plaguing it, and strange dogs coming and going. It ain't any kind of a home for a dog at a lumber camp — not any kind of a home."

"No, it ain't," admitted Hape, "nor for a woman either."

"Tell you what I might do," suggested the woman. "I might go over to Struby's and see if Mrs. Struby could take the dogs — just till you sent for 'em, you know. I suppose — after you git back East, and — settled, you'll be sending for your dogs anyhow, won't you?"

Hape had not thought of the possibility of sending for his dogs. His face lighted up. "I could do that, Julia. You go over and see if Struby's folks will take the dogs, just till I get back East and — settled."

"She may not like dogs," mused Julia.

"Who?"

"Why, Pearl Alleen, the girl you are to marry."

"I wouldn't give much for a woman who didn't like dogs,"

said Hape, bridling. "If she's my wife she'll have to put up with Roxy and Dan or she can git her bonnet and hike!"

They followed the river trail in silence for awhile. Ahead was the flame of the refuse burner, and in the west the flame of the setting sun.

"Here comes the millionaire!" called out a shingle weaver, as Hape and his companion approached the mill.

Hape grinned. "Who told you so much?" he protested, but he was pleased in spite of himself.

"Twenty-five thousand dollars! You're the luckiest hay-Jake I ever run up against!" declared another of the group.

Hape swelled with his own importance. It would have been beyond human nature not to have enjoyed the gaping wonder and palpable envy of the camp.

"Say Hape," declared the head sawyer, "I shall look for your obituary in the Eastern papers now pretty soon. 'Mr. Hape Storner fatally injured by his motor goin' over an embankment.' That's the way all these here money swells pass in their checks nowadays."

"Shall you really git a buzz-wagon, Hape?" asked the boy who carried water for the cook.

"Either that or a balloon," grinned Hape.

It certainly was pleasant — this suddenly acquired importance. Heretofore the mill men had looked down upon him as a mere tiller of the soil, a vendor of butter and eggs, rather than a member of the honorable guild of shingle weavers. His were certainly pleasant thoughts as he went whistling home with Roxy and Dan trailing at his heels.

In the morning, however, his mood had changed. He could not help feeling sorry for the young calf, remembering that hereafter it would be subject to the unreliable memory and irregular habits of the Winns. And there was Bonny, his mare, and her colt. He had been so proud of that colt, and had looked forward with great pleasure to the time when, broken to harness by his own hand, it would shine, a fitting mate, by the side of its own spirited yet gentle mother. And then the hens — he was just working into White Leghorns, and there were no less than seven hopeful mothers sitting at that very moment. Under the man-

agement of the Winn boys what would be the outcome of their maternal efforts?

His reflections were interrupted by old Winn himself, who appeared at that moment sweating under a load consisting of a wash-tub and a basket filled with soiled clothing.

"What you got there?" demanded Hape.

"The wash; what d'yeh s'pose?"

"The wash? You don't expect me to take in washin', do you?"

"No, but M'liss sent it over. She's coming right along in a few minutes. She said she could clear out some of this here junk, and wash right out here beside your well, 'stead of packin' water up from the crick, as she has to do over to our house."

Hape's wrath rose within him. The "junk" referred to by old Winn was a collection of house-plants in which Hape had long taken a sheepish delight. There were three coleuses, a fuchsia, an umbrella plant, and a rose geranium. He knew a man ought to be ashamed of such old-maidish tastes, but he had them, and in spite of certain sarcastic remarks on the part of his neighbors, he had persisted in his fancy. The potted, growing things reminded him of those which his mother used to treasure. He knew there were just twenty-eight leaves on the coleus and fourteen on the rose geranium; and the only "licking" he had ever administered to Roxy was the morning after she had chewed the top off the umbrella plant.

"You take that wash-tub and clothes-basket and pack 'em back home, Chet," he commanded, sullenly.

"Now see here, Hape," expostulated the old man, "what's the use o' makin' me carry them darn things clear home agin? You're pretty ones!" he whined. "M'liss drives me off through the bresh, loaded with a darn old tub a ketchin' on the bushes and yankin' this way and that, an' then you drives me home agin, an' when I git home she'll set me packin' back!"

"You tell M'liss Winn there'll be time enough for her to move in when I move out!" persisted Hape.

"Why, see here, Hape, you'd orghter be on the trail this minute! Just think of your Aunt Henry!"

"I've got something to think of besides my Aunt Henry, I guess."

"What, I'd like to know?"

"Well, there's Bonny and the colt."

"Hape, I hope you got sense enough to know that we can't run this farm without a horse. You expect to sell the mare with the farm, don't yeh?"

"If you've got a hundred dollars anywhere in your breeches pocket to hand over, I'm willing to sell you the mare."

"Well, Hape Storner, if I was wuth twenty-five thousand —"

"But I've got to have some money to git back East with, ain't I? Aunt Henry Batterson didn't send any railroad ticket with her invitation, I notice. I've got to dispose of my horse and the two cows —"

A pained look crept over old Winn's face. "And I heerd Sam tellin' the boys to scrub up a couple of them rusty old milk-buckets and come over this mornin' and strip the ceouws. He supposed of course you'd be chuckin' along the railroad by this. M'liss'll be disappointed about her washin', I bet, but she'll jest have to wait; I ain't goin' to go bangin' and thumpin' with that tub and lud of clo'es back through the bresh — not if I know it! When shall I tell M'liss you'll be startin'? She wants to come over an' clean up."

"When I git good and ready!"

Hape knew that M'liss's "cleaning up" would embrace demolishing the house-plants, scalding the cat, and beginning the process of turning his little home into just such another misery of desolation as her own had always been.

The old man disappeared on the trail, grumbling as he went. Later he returned with a Boston rocker and a tin boiler.

"There, by Jing!" he ejaculated, plumping his burdens down in the path. "If anybody wants a nice handy job let him try carryin' a biler an' a rockin'-chair over a little crooked trail through the woods! This rocker would reach out and grab a holt of every sapling it come to; and I don't think the biler missed a stump on the whole trip! I must a sounded like a brass band comin' along. M'liss says she'll be over to-night to put them clo'es to soak so she can git to washin' early in the mornin', and

Sam says if you ain't a mind to sell the mare and ceouws he don't believe he'll bother with the farm at all."

"All right," acquiesed Hape, with such startling alacrity that the old man jumped.

"Oh, well," he added hastily, "it ain't Sam that's buyin' the place. He's got nothin' to do with it; it's me that's buyin'."

He shuffled out of sight once more, and Hape kicked the wash-tub away from the coleus and sat down on the back step with his head in his hands.

Julia Haggins found him sitting in this forlorn attitude when she came to take the dogs over to Struby's.

"I saw Kate Struby this morning," she announced cheerfully, and she says they will take the dogs and keep them till you get settled in the East and send for 'em."

"It's awful good of you, Julia," declared Hape with a long sigh. "I just couldn't bear to leave 'em here with them shiftless Winns."

"Of course not," replied Julia, with a sympathetic drawl.

"I wish you could find a good place for Bonny and the cows. I just can't bear to think of them being left to them devilish boys, and that lazy Sam, and that old catamount of a M'liss! She says she's goin' to root out all this 'junk' and make a place to do her washin' out here on the back stoop."

"Oh, dear!" Julia bent over the reviving umbrella plant. "What a pity! And they coming on so nicely! There's lots of women around the neighborhood that'll be glad to take them off your hands. I'll find places for them; and, now I think of it, I heard Mr. Bates say he wanted to buy two good cows, and as I go along with Roxy and Dan I'll stop and tell him that you are going East and have got some cows for sale."

"Thank you ever so much, Julia. I don't know whatever I should have done without you, I'm sure."

"Oh, that's all right, Hape; and don't worry about the mare. You'll be sure to get rid of her. I don't blame you for not wanting to leave her with the Winns — they're a poor lot. Speak of angels — here's old Winn now."

Old Winn carried two fishing rods, a big iron kettle, and a griddle, used for baking the Winn "flapjacks."

"Well, if this ain't the darndest load!" he grumbled. "Where can I stow these things, Hape, where they won't nobody find 'em, and where they won't git mixed up with your'n?"

"Better set 'em up against the barn over to your place," replied Hape, indignantly.

"If you'll call the dogs, Hape, I guess I'll be going," said Julia. "I've got to be back at the cook-house by eleven, you know."

Roxy objected strenuously to the leash, and even patient old Dan could not understand why he was going with Julia Haggins under compulsion, and without his beloved master.

"I'll see about the horse and cow to-morrow," Julia called back from the edge of the timber, where she disappeared with her unwilling charges.

Hape was in no mood to humor old Winn's interference.

"Where is she takin' the dogs to?" he inquired of Hape.

"Over to Struby's."

"Humph!" Goin' to take the horse an' ceouw over to Struby's, too?"

"Maybe."

"Well; makin' herself pretty numerous round here, hain't she?"

"Not any more than some other folks I could name."

"Heard anything from your Aunt Henry?"

"Oh, yes. Had a megaphone message that she was on her way out here."

"Now that's a pretty way to joke about your only livin' relative, ain't it?"

"I don't know that she is my only livin' relative."

"You don't know? Didn't she say in your letter that she was your only livin' relative?"

"Yes, but she may not be livin' now."

"Say, Hape, now honest, when be yeh goin' to start. M'liss says she's just got to know by to-night on account of the wash. And now that we're about moved —"

"About moved? Where's your cook-stove?"

"Hape, I hope Julia Haggins ain't goin' to take your cook-stove over to Struby's?"

"No, but I've made her a present of it. What's she goin' to do with it, was you going to ask? She's goin' to wear it on a chain round her neck as a souvenir."

"Well I'm goin' home!" said old Winn in disgust, "and I ain't comin' over agin till you git ready to start! M'liss wanted me to pack over another load of stuff, but I ain't goin' to bring over no more till after you're gone."

"That's right; see that you don't."

"When the mill whistle blew for noon it seemed to Hape as if he could not endure the unnatural silence which reigned about the place. Roxy always began the hubbub when the whistle started, and Dan was a close second. While the dogs howled, the hens cackled and the roosters crowed. It was a question if Roxy could hear the whistle away over at Struby's.

About three o'clock a man came to look at the mare with a view to purchasing. He said he had heard at the camp that Storner had a mare and colt to sell.

He liked Bonny, and told Storner to ride her over the next day and get his money.

"I guess everything is arranged for now," sighed Hape. "I suppose I might as well pack my grip."

But this he could not bring himself to do, and sat in the back door, hugging his knees and reveling in homesick gloom.

He was in hopes Julia Haggins would come over for a few minutes, as was her custom, while her helper washed the supper dishes. Instead there was a cracking of bushes and a quack of family vituperation, and the whole Winn tribe appeared in the clearing. They pervaded the yard with a determined attitude — the attitude of proprietors.

"Heard the news?" began old Winn. "They say Julia Haggins is goin' to marry Jim Struby — you remember — the oldest one that lost his wife two years ago — "

"What?" Hape called out sharply.

"Yep. I heard it over to the mill to-day. No wonder she wants the calf and the cook-stove. Featherin' her own nest, you see.

"We'll have to see about that," said Hape, and without an-

other word, stuck his hands into his pockets and strode off in the direction of the shingle camp.

While M'liss moved the house-plants from the flat stump and installed the wash-tub thereon, Hape was striding along the trail by the river-bank like a man possessed. What had he been thinking of! What was twenty-five thousand dollars to comfort and peace; the company of your own dogs and horses, and the encouragement and companionship of the one person on earth who thoroughly understood you and liked the same things which you liked? Jim Struby, indeed! Why, Jim Struby used to come home drunk and beat his wife! Jim Struby!

When he came in sight of the mill Julia Haggins was standing in the cook-house door alone. He did not care to have the shingle-men see him; therefore he beckoned her to come to him.

She came readily enough, in that mild, obedient way of hers, and he led her along the trail without a word until they came to that spot where the river spread in noisy shallows, and the timber rose high and dark on either side. Then he put his arms about her and kissed her.

"Julia, I don't know what I've been thinking of. Old Winn just told me that you were going to marry Jim Struby. I knew that wasn't so, but somehow his saying that, opened my eyes to the fact that if I went away East to live, like as not you would run across some fool shingle-weaver that you liked well enough to marry, and then where would I be?"

"What about Pearl Alleen —" began Julia.

"Oh the devil take Pearl Alleen," raged Hape, "who wants Pearl Alleen! I want you; and I'm going to let Aunt Henry and her farm go hang! I've got a nice little farm right here, and two of the nicest dogs, and the nicest mare and colt and calf — yes, and the nicest lot of white leghorn eggs, all pipped and ready to break forth into joy hallelujah, that any man ever had. All I need is a nice wife, and I've got her picked out — let's go home and tell the news to the Winns."

"Why, Hape, you don't mean to give up going East after your aunt's property?"

"That's what. Enough's enough, ain't it?"

"Oh, Hape!" murmured the woman, and hid her happy face in his colored shirt-front.

"The fool part of it is, that I didn't know what I wanted until Chet Winn said you were going to marry somebody else. To-morrow you give your boss warning, and then hoof it up to Struby's after Dan and Roxy."

"Hadn't we better wait a little while, Hape?"

"Wait? What for?"

"You — might change your mind —"

"Change my — well, Julia, I can't wonder at your sayin' that; I'm a pretty big fool, that's straight, but I'm next my job now all right. My mind, what there is of it, is as settled as a rock fence. Look yonder at my place! Wouldn't that tree you?"

M'liss was putting the tubful of clothes to soak on the stump, dedicated by Hape to his choicest house-plants. Chud, the youngest Winn, was digging for worms in the geranium bed, and the three remaining members of the family smoked complacently on the back porch.

"Well, Hape," began old Winn, "it's goin' to be mighty lonesome around here to-morrer after you're gone. We hate like sin to lose you out'n the neighborhood."

"Well, don't take on so, Chet, I've got some good news for you — I ain't a goin'."

"Ain't a goin'!" yelled the old man.

"Ain't a goin'!" chorused the entire Winn family.

"Nope; I've changed my mind."

"Ain't a goin'!" snarled M'liss, "after we've took an' moved everything over?"

"You can 'just took an' move' everything back. I told you not to do it."

"Hape," whined Sam, "be you goin' to pass up twenty-five thousand dollars for the sake of this old rattle-trap hole?"

"You bet!"

"Hape," said old Winn, solemnly, "I hope — oh, I hope your Aunt Henry won't hant you!"

"She won't," responded Hape gaily. "With Dan and Roxy and Julia here for company, Aunt Henry won't trouble

me. Ten to one Aunt Henry'll get well and marry that Deacon Harkins herself, and leave her little old wad all to Pearl Alleen. Now if you'll just ketch hold the other handle of this tub, Sam and I will help you empty out the water. Clothes'll be a little soggy to carry home, I'm afraid, but I guess all of you together can manage. Put part of 'em in the boiler and let Chud and Bud pack it between 'em. Julia and I are goin' down to the city to-morrow to git married, after which she's coming over here to fix up, and she won't want any of this ruck of your'n cluttering around."

"Grandad," accused M'liss, as the family went rattling along the trail laden with their portable household effects, "when you told that whizzer about Jule Haggins marryin' Jim Struby, you struck the match to the slashin' sure enough, you big fool!"

The Battle of Warragul Plain.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

HE dusty trail stretched out before Keswick like a yellow ribbon that connected him with the dusty horizon. On each side of the road the land was brown and barren. Not a tree or shrub was in sight, and the heat waves danced riotously as the sun's rays were reflected from the glittering sand.

Keswick plodded wearily onward. He knew that the nearest township was twenty miles away, and that Warragul Plain, the lonely stretch of sand that he was then crossing, was part of the Luabula sheep-run where the great flocks of McConaghy, "The Wool King," searched industriously for scorched grass blades in the blazing drought time. Far away to the east flowed the Murray, and beyond were the faint outlines of the blue hills of Cahambarra.

Presently Keswick came to a slight dip in the level surface of the plain, and stopped for a moment to view the scene. The basin was about half a mile in extent, and scattered over it were the fallen trunks of some five-score gum trees, all lying with their bare white branches turned toward the north. One glance explained their peculiar appearance. A cyclone, sweeping up from the south, had torn the trees from the sandy soil and stretched them in rows, like soldiers that had been mowed down by the murderous fire of a hidden foe. Not a single tree had been left standing. The dry soil had not given the roots sufficient holding power to resist the blast, which had gathered force while careering over the brown waste, and the entire clump had been laid low.

After a quick survey Keswick moved forward, but stopped suddenly and stared at the fallen timber. From beside the larg-

*Copyright, 1909, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

est tree a weird apparition rose and faced him. It was the figure of a man, bent and grizzled, his face and arms burned to a deep brown color by the tropical sun. A long beard extended to his waist, and his matted hair formed a halo around the haggard face. It was a strange, ghostly-looking spectre, and for a moment Keswick stood undecided. Then curiosity impelled him to move in the direction of the bearded one.

The old man did not move. He stood with his hands clasped, his lips moving rapidly, and the thick mop of hair waving backward and forward as he nodded his head to keep time to his mutterings.

As Keswick's greeting was unanswered, he advanced inquiringly to within a few yards of the stranger. Mentally he booked the ancient as a "hatter," one of the wandering hermits of the Bush, and, knowing their aversion to all travelers, he repeated the greeting and then proceeded to seat himself on the trunk of the tree near which the old man stood.

The action immediately aroused the ancient from his stupor.

"Not there!" he cried, dashing between Keswick and the fallen tree. "Not there! Sit on any of the others, but not — not — not — " His words died away in further unintelligible protest.

Keswick stared in surprise, and humoring the man remained standing.

"Why?" he asked.

The sunken eyes of the bearded spectre glittered brightly as he vainly endeavored to control his tongue, but, fearful lest Keswick should sit upon the tree in spite of his protestations, he clutched him by the arm and pushed him roughly back upon the trunk of another close by. For a moment the two sat staring at each other, and then the old man regained his speech, and pointing to the giant tree whispered hoarsely: "That is the king — the dead king — it is not right to sit upon him."

Keswick whistled softly. Men who made friends of trees were not altogether unfamiliar to him. He had known of shepherds buried in the solitude who told their daily troubles to the white gum trees that surrounded their lonely huts, but the kingship idea was novel.

"What was he king of?" he asked.

The bearded one moved closer along the smooth trunk.

"King of the trees," he said, softly.

Keswick remained silent. Out on the gray plain a kangaroo sat motionless. A rabbit peered from a neighboring burrow, and a peculiar stillness hung over the scorched plain. It appeared to be the home of mystery, with the sun-tanned ancient representing the spirit of Drought and Decay.

An uneasy feeling took possession of Keswick, and he made a motion to rise, but the other laid a restraining hand upon his arm.

"You must stay!" he cried. "I must tell you! Don't go away! Perhaps I shall not see another man for months, for years, perhaps never. Sit down. You must hear it!"

His bare arms pushed Keswick back into a sitting position, and the traveler thought it inadvisable to resist. Mentally he cursed the curiosity that had led him from the trail to investigate the actions of the crazy "hatter," but he kept calm as the old man waved his long arms and excitedly moved up and down before him.

"Years ago," he began, pointing to the big trunk upon which Keswick had attempted to seat himself, "he was the king of all these trees. There was none like him. He was the great green gum that ruled over all. Ah! he was a great tree! In the hot summer days the sheep crept into the shadow thrown by his subjects, while I sat beneath him — beneath the king, and listened to him, talking to his people.

"There was none like him. His head was lifted high above the others; his trunk was twice their girth. His branches caught the first beams that came from the east, and waved a goodbye to the sun when he dipped in the west."

The old man's shrill words rushed out over the barren plain, piercing the dancing heat waves like bullets of sound, and Keswick felt strangely oppressed.

"Then came the rebel," shrieked the hermit. "This," kicking savagely at a smaller bole lying near the great trunk — "this thing begun to murmur against the king. I heard him during the hot afternoons, and I knew. Oh, yes, I knew, but —

fool, idiot, madman that I was — I didn't tell the king. The rebel was plotting with the others to kill him!

"In the mornings, all through the long hot days, right on through the black nights I heard them planning and whispering, and it was always the same. The rebel was urging them to rise against his king, my king, the king of Warragul Plain!"

The narrator's excitement increased. The sunken eyes blazed with the fierce light of a madness born of solitude. He glared at the dead tree to which he attributed the cunning of a Catiline, and the matted hair was tossed wildly as he strutted up and down.

"And one night they rose against him," he cried. "All that day the air was thick and heavy, and the trees whispered much amongst themselves. The rebel talked always. He was a devil, a fiend, a murderer! And the king seemed ignorant of it all. His great head waved high above all the prattling, as if he heard nothing, or, if he did hear, was not afraid.

"When I penned the sheep I returned to the little cave there in the hillside, and watched. I knew the mutiny would break out — I knew! The rebel had won them over to his side, not all, but some. There was a moment's stillness after the sun slipped to rest, and then the battle began. My God, what a sight! The followers of the rebel attacked those who stood loyal to the king. They fought and struggled with each other. Their limbs snapped like matchwood, and a noise like thunder went out over the plain. It was terrible — terrible!

"I knelt and prayed for the safety of the king, but I was lifted up by the fierce wind caused by the battle, whirled down the hill and half buried in the sand. And I knew as I was carried along that the king was losing. My king.

"When I struggled out of the sand it was nearly over. Of all the trees that filled the basin only the king and the rebel were left standing. All the others were thrown down as you see them. But the king and the rebel fought on — fought like demons. They swayed backwards and forwards as they struggled, but at last the king gripped him and thrust him back. I thought the king was safe and I prayed and cried with joy, but no! As the rebel fell he wound his branches around the great

king, and they came thundering down together.

"It was all over then. They lay side by side, the murderer and his victim. Now you know — you know all! Here in the hot days I pray for him I loved, the king of Warragul Plain."

The unfortunate hermit dropped on his knees beside the dead tree and began praying in hoarse whispers, while Keswick watched him like one entranced. But the silence of the gray plain stirred him to action. Unobserved he grasped his pack and walked hurriedly towards the west. When he reached the rim of the basin he looked back. The mad shepherd, with uplifted hands, was still praying beside his king.

A Materializing Turk.*

BY MEYRAM HILL.

HEY called him "Smooth" Sanderson — and he was.

Smooth in looks from his silk hat to his patent leather shoes — including the smile upon his face and the flow of words from his lips.

Yet now, in the solitude of the bare office of the defunct, sheriff-sold, Daisy Fair Gold Mine Company, the smoothness at least was gone from the countenance of Mr. Sanderson.

He was up against it. The clothes on his back, the soap box upon which he sat, were his lone possessions. Even his nerve, usually a beautiful thing — for his victims to conjure with — was gone. In his own vocabulary, he was "down and out."

The office door, from which as yet the gold letters had not been removed, opened softly and in upon Mr. Sanderson's meditations glided one ex-partner of his, Mr. Wallworth.

Mr. Wallworth gazed about.

"Too bad!" he soliloquized absently, as if the occupant of the soap box was far distant.

"Too damn bad, James! Too damn bad!"

"Sheriff sale?"

Mr. Sanderson nodded.

"What next?"

Mr. Sanderson tilted his silk hat back, pulled forth the lining to his empty pockets.

"James," he remarked scornfully, "my nerve has gone. I'm as empty as my pockets."

Mr. Wallworth gazed mournfully at his ex-partner and shook his head sadly.

"To think," he murmured, "I should have come here and

*Copyright, 1909, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

found you thus. You, always the fountain head of inspiration. Smooth, I'm down — nerve gone, too — just missed a fly cop by a corner and rushed here — "

"For what?" Mr. Sanderson demanded, belligerently.

"Well," Mr. Wallworth's eyebrows elevated, "it's folly to tell you — money."

"Yes, it is folly." Mr. Sanderson turned to gaze out of the window at his back over the city where lived and mourned so many of his victims.

"A little money," murmured Mr. Wallworth. "I have a sure thing."

"A little money," repeated Mr. Sanderson, "is a sure thing. As the amount grows the sureness becomes more apparent."

"If one could only reach out and pick it from the air ——"

Mr. Sanderson wheeled like a flash, nearly upsetting the soap box.

"Pick it from the air?" he cried. "Materialize it!"

Mr. Wallworth paused at the sudden enthusiasm of the other, and then as Mr. Sanderson made slow passes at the air with his fat, chubby hands, as if literally picking money or something from space, he rose slowly.

"Are you gone as far at that, Smooth?" he inquired sarcastically.

"Pick it from the air! Materialize it!" Mr. Sanderson repeated. Then he jabbed his hat solidly on to his head and exclaimed: "Come!"

He led the wondering Mr. Wallworth to the sidewalk into a street car — Mr. Wallworth paid the fare — and, finally, to the lower side of the city where teeming humanity resides.

They came to a halt before a massive door, and, once Mr. Sanderson was sure of his bearings, they entered.

They brought up in a narrow room, where a huge, fat, pompous-looking individual swung back and forth in a leather revolving chair.

"You're the proprietor of the joint?" Mr. Sanderson inquired.

The pompous-looking one nodded, confessing to the honor of owning and operating one of the many east side halls, where nightly a cheap so-called high-class vaudeville entertainment held

forth, with much poor whiskey and short beer glass on the side.

"Last week," Mr. Sanderson drove straight to the point, "you had a Turk here — a raw-boned turbaned chap?"

The pompous one nodded again.

"Got his address?" Mr. Sanderson demanded.

Again the pompous one nodded and at last spoke. "Why?"

"I want it."

"Why?"

Mr. Sanderson made a sign — a strange movement of hand to cheek — and the pompous one recognizing in the man before him a fellow member of a shifting, fleeting, do-others order, stirred to activity.

Without more ado, he wheeled to his desk, and from a pile of dirty cards pulled forth one, which he passed over to his visitor.

Mr. Sanderson gazed upon the card.

"The Materializing Turk. Rango Marzoke. 115 Highway Street," he read.

"Come," he said again. And with a nod to the pompous one, led Mr. Wallworth back to the street.

"Well?" Mr. Wallworth finally demanded, even his curiosity a bit aroused.

"Come," Mr. Sanderson once more suggested, and led the way.

Highway street is an alley — a blind, dirty, smelly alley, full of howling children, stray dogs and broken — unnecessary to be mentioned — empty bottles.

The number sought was at the very end, and through a narrow door, up three flights of dark, rickety stairs, passed Mr. Smooth Sanderson and trailing Mr. Wallworth.

On the top, in a narrow room, seated cross-legged upon a narrow bed, they found a turbaned dark, shriveled man.

"Mr. Rango Marzoke?" Mr. Sanderson inquired.

The turban nodded.

"Are you this?" Mr. Sanderson pointed to the card.

"Sure!" came the answer with a bland smile.

"Can you do it right here without any stage props?" Mr. Sanderson demanded breathlessly.

"A demonstration?" the turbaned one demanded with a broad accent. "Why?"

"There's money in it," Mr. Sanderson replied briefly, "if you can make good."

"What will ze gentleman have?"

Mr. Sanderson held out his broad, chubby hands.

"They're empty," he remarked — as if that was not a self-evident fact. "Put a book in them."

The turbaned one straightened slowly, his head lifted high and his eyes fastened suddenly upon the wall opposite, as if it were ten thousand miles away instead of ten feet.

A few moments passed, and suddenly Mr. Sanderson, whose eyes were fastened not upon the face of Mr. Marzoke but upon his own fat hands, started.

In his right hand rested a beautiful red-covered book. With his left hand he touched it. He turned it over and then he whispered softly — for even he was awed — to Mr. Wallworth.

"Do *you* see it, James?"

"Sure," Mr. Wallworth nodded.

"Feel it," Mr. Sanderson ordered.

Mr. Wallworth rose without a word and took the book. As he held it out before him Mr. Sanderson exclaimed:

"Let it go!"

Mr. Wallworth dropped it, for the order came suddenly in the stillness and he was startled.

The book fell to the floor with a crash.

"Now," Mr. Sanderson went on slowly, his eyes on the book, "pick it up, James, but" he put in quickly to the Turk, "you take it away — unmaterialize it, or whatever you call it."

Mr. Wallworth stooped for the book. His hand closed about it, he half raised it from the floor — but he held nothing, his hand was empty.

"Sure!" Mr. Sanderson nodded as he sat down on a broken chair and moped his brow. The room wasn't warm, but the perspiration stood out in beads on his forehead.

As he turned to the turbaned one, Mr. Wallworth was still opening and closing his empty hand, his eyes, wide with something akin to horror, fastened inquiringly upon his ex-partner.

Mr. Sanderson held out his fat hands again.

"A dollar bill!" he demanded.

Again the turbaned one straightened.

In a moment, Mr. Sanderson held a crisp dollar bill in his hand—the next instant it was gone.

"A ten-dollar bill!" Mr. Sanderson demanded.

Again his hand clutched the money—again it was gone.

"Oh my!" sighed Mr. Wallworth.

"Come," Mr. Sanderson ordered, and this time he moved to the street, followed by Mr. Wallworth and the turbaned one.

Back to the ex-gold mining company's office the three went.

Gazing from the window, Mr. Sanderson made out by a distant tower that it was nearly three o'clock. Turning to the two, he began to speak.

"Around the corner is the Consolidated National Bank. In the heyday of our youth—the youth of the Daisy Fair Gold Mining Company—we had a bank account there—it was in my name. It is still there, though, I regret to say, the balance is not large. The bank closes in half an hour. You," he turned to the turbaned one, "come to the door. I will go in—I will make out a deposit slip for one hundred thousand dollars. You—you will stand there at the door and materialize the money—*ten* one thousand dollar bills—I will deposit it. The cashier will place it in the drawer. Spear the deposit slip. I will come out—then you can let it go. To-morrow, Wallworth, I will give you my check for ninety thousand dollars. You can get it certified and—" but Mr. Sanderson paused for want of breath.

"Oh my," sighed Mr. Wallworth.

The turbaned one sat silent.

"Well?" Mr. Sanderson demanded of him.

"I—where do I come in?"

"Well—well, we'll split the ninety into three parts. Mr. Wallworth passed the remark that brought the idea,—I coined it,—you materialized it."

"It would take time," the turbaned one suggested.

"How much?"

"To-morrow at this time," he answered, and arose.

"At the bank, then," Mr. Sanderson suggested. "Unfortunately, the Daisy Fair Gold Mining Company moves to-day—the—the quarters are too small—we have given up the lease."

The turbaned one nodded and passed out into the hall.

As the door closed, Mr. Sanderson grabbed Mr. Wallworth by the shoulders.

"Quick, James! Slip on this moustache!" He thrust a beautiful black, flowing adornment for the upper lip into his ex-partner's hand — "and follow. It's too good to let him out of our sight. At the bank to-morrow, two-thirty."

The next morning bright and early found Mr. Sanderson pacing up and down the street outside the Consolidated National Bank's gray stone edifice.

He was palpably nervous, and yet he felt reasonably sure of his venture.

The noon hour came and finally two o'clock. At two-thirty Mr. Wallworth put in an appearance.

"Well?" demanded Mr. Sanderson.

"He went back straight to the alley," Mr. Wallworth reported. "I waited all night, all to-day. At one o'clock he hadn't come out, so I went in. He wasn't there."

Mr. Sanderson mopped his brow.

"He's got drunk — " he suggested — "drunk on the idea."

"It's the thirteenth of the month, Smooth. Perhaps it's not our lucky day.

"Don't believe in signs," Mr. Sanderson advised.

At quarter to three, Mr. Sanderson could contain himself no longer, but entered the bank.

He moved — one eye on the entrance — to a side desk and made out a deposit slip for one hundred thousand dollars. He felt it was as well to be prepared.

Three o'clock came and he still waited.

Suddenly with a start, he heard his name called, and turned to note that the cashier at the grated window was beckoning to him.

"Anything we can do for you, Mr. Sanderson, before we close?"

"No," Mr. Sanderson shook his head slowly, "not to-day."

"Sorry," the cashier remarked. And then as Mr. Sanderson started to move away he added: "Very much obliged for sending us that new account."

"New account!" Mr. Sanderson's eyes widened. "Which one?"

"The foreign gentleman."

"Mr. Rango Marzoke?" Mr. Sanderson demanded with a shriek.

"Yes, that was his name, I believe."

"And he — he — he deposited — deposited — "

"Oh, yes, he opened a very nice account," the cashier smiled blandly.

"A hundred thousand, I believe?" Mr. Sanderson strove to control his voice.

"Two hundred thousand."

Suddenly Mr. Sanderson moved close to the window.

"He was to get a certified check for a transaction — Did he?"

"He did."

Mr. Sanderson moved toward the door.

On the curb without waited Mr. Wallworth.

"Come," Mr. Sanderson suggested in a meek, lowly voice. And he led the way down the street.

The Cross of Chivalry.*

BY ALFRED B. OSGOODBY.

EDITH LOWERRE sat with her elbows on her knees and her face resting between her delicate hands. Her eyes were gazing straight at the man in front of her and there was more than friendliness in their expression. Her cheeks were flushed and her entire attitude denoted intense interest and obvious pleasure.

"I am so glad to see you again. You don't know how often I have thought of you. We were such good friends once," and a little sigh, almost inaudible, followed.

"Yes, good friends," Hugh Broughton responded, and with slight hesitation, in a lower tone, he added, "almost lovers."

Then, noting her heightened color, he said quickly, "Forgive me, I spoke heedlessly."

"But only the truth," she said daringly.

"A kind of truth that is dangerous," he rejoined.

"Not necessarily. The fact that I am another man's wife eliminates any possible danger in retrospection, and surely there is no harm in agreeable reminiscence."

"Agreeable?" He smiled.

The flush of her cheeks crept closer to her temples.

"Would you have me admit more?"

"You need not admit anything," he answered. We both understand. But, believe me, I did not come here to-night with any intention of discussing the past. I expected to meet your husband. To be frank, I wanted to know the man you preferred to me."

"I don't want you to meet Gerald," she replied quickly. "He knows I loved you — once," hesitatingly, with her eyes downcast.

"Why should that interfere with our being friends? You belong to him, and I respect his right of possession. I am sure he would be magnanimous under the circumstances."

* Copyright, 1909, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

"You are wrong. He hates you. If he knew you were here to-night he would kill both you and me. He hates every man who was even my friend, and you more than others, because — perhaps," — she spoke slowly, "I foolishly told him once, in a spirit of pique, that he was not the first man who had loved me. He flew into a perfect rage at my admission, and demanded your name. I recklessly told him."

"Your statement does not alter my desire to meet him — to be friends. That was my primary object in coming here to-night — at the first opportunity offered me since your marriage. Why, from the very moment I learned that business would bring me from New York to Savannah, my sole thought has been to look you up, and," he added, "to meet the man who won you away from me — the man whom I have always thought must have been born under a lucky star."

The compliment, impulsively uttered, intensified the expression in her eyes.

"Fate regulates these things better than we can," she replied, "and it is fortunate for both of us that your visit was unconsciously timed during his absence. Gerald will return to-morrow and for my sake you must not see me again." Her eyes glistened. "I am sorry to say that."

"It is my portion," he replied in a tone of resignation.

"But you do not understand," she said. Gerald loves me, and I love him — anyway I am his wife. It is his disposition to be wildly jealous of me at the slightest provocation. He is a Southerner, with the temperament true to a man of the south — love of family honor — strict adherence to moral principles — abhorring even the semblance of sexual stigma — demanding the strictest allegiance of his wife — " she clasped her hands nervously, and avoiding her companion's eyes, added slowly — "and receiving it."

After a moment's silence she continued :

"Only the other night he told me that he would rather see me dead than have the slightest taint of dishonor attached to me. I am sure he would kill me if he even suspected me of disloyalty. That is his way of loving — selfish, maybe — but we women like it."

"I see it all clearly," he responded. "You are very happy

with him — I am glad. You know me well enough to believe that I would not, if I could, do aught that would risk your happiness. And yet, you will also understand that I am glad to have you remember other days." His voice was low, and became reminiscent. He leaned closer, and there came into his eyes a look she had almost forgotten. "Those were the happiest days of my life ; and you will forgive me for telling you that is the reason I have never married."

Her eyes were looking straight into his ; their faces were close together. She could almost feel his breath upon her cheek. Her eyes half closed, and the memory of their love-days drifted slowly, with insidious effect, through her mind. Instinctively her hand reached his, and closed over it with soft pressure. Her momentary weakness infected him ; his veins were throbbing, and his senses blinded. The mad impulse to seize her, kiss her, and to pour out his love of long years, possessed him ; but only for an instant. Their eyes met again, and each suddenly recognized the weakness of the other. His man's strength asserted itself first. He arose and strolled across the room, and his action served to restore her self-possession. For a moment he stood before her escritoire. Something shining riveted his attention. He picked up a small, pearl-handled revolver, and, turning toward her, inquired :

"Is this dangerous plaything yours ?"

She had quite recovered herself, and with a smile came to his side.

"Gerald's frequent absences from home cause him great concern for my safety ; and he has tried to teach me how to use this 'plaything' in an emergency, in case of intrusion." Then laughingly, "I am almost afraid to touch it."

She turned away, and seated herself at the piano.

"There is an old song I should like to sing to you. Would you care to hear it ?"

Before he could answer there was a sudden sound at the door. A startled look came into her eyes and she arose quickly.

There was the noise of a key turning in the lock. Her face blanched with fear. He saw and understood, even before he heard her whispered : "Gerald !"

The next moment she felt the cold barrel of the " plaything " pressed close to her hand ; and the voice of her companion commanding :

" Point it at me ! Quick !"

She had no power to resist the suggestion, and in her state of sudden fear obeyed.

Gerald Lowerre's figure appeared in the doorway. Before him was a dramatic picture. His wife, her face deadly white, with arm outstretched, clasped in her nerveless fingers the revolver pointed at a stranger, who merely smiled and said :

" Fairly caught."

In a moment Gerald Lowerre was at his wife's side. One arm supported her swaying figure, while he gently took the revolver from her hand, and continuing to cover the intruder, said to her :

" In the nick of time. I will relieve you of the care of this gentleman." And then directing his remarks to Broughton, he inquired in a tone that was savagely polite :

" Will you be good enough to explain your presence here ? "

Still smiling, Broughton answered :

" With pleasure. I am a connoisseur of diamonds ; a collector of gold and silver plate — not plated — pray, don't misunderstand me."

" I should say you had accumulated considerable brass in your calling," retorted Lowerre.

" My calling at the present moment is evidently not suited to your convenience," replied the other, " and with your permission, I shall take my leave."

" You'll take your leave in the custody of a policeman," exclaimed Lowerre, exasperated at the coolness of the supposed burglar.

At these words, Edith, still trembling, even under her husband's support, said quickly :

" Don't, Gerald ; please don't. Let him go."

" You are as kind as you are brave, Edith," responded Lowerre, " But this fellow needs strenuous treatment, to prevent him from intruding, in the pursuit of his profession, on lone women."

She, half fainting from fright, slipped into a chair, while Lowerre, still pointing the revolver at Broughton, quietly remarked :

"If you attempt to move, I'll shoot you;" at the same time, crossing the room to the telephone, without relaxing his vigilance for a moment, he called the nearest police station, and briefly explained the situation.

Edith was speechless, and the smile faded from Broughton's face, but his determination to shield her from any suspicion never wavered and he resolutely avoided her appealing eyes.

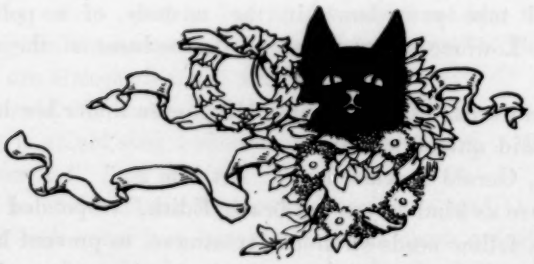
. . . . . .

Ten minutes later, Broughton was taken a prisoner from the Lowerre home.

It was about a year afterward that the Savannah *News,* in its daily issue, recorded this item:

"Convict No. 1921, sentenced for attempting to burglarize the home of Mr. Gerald Lowerre, of Savannah, and about whom there has been considerable mystery, his identity never having been established by the authorities, was found dead early this morning in his cell at the State's prison. He will be buried in the prison cemetery, and his grave will be marked only with his convict number."

Strangely coincident, there appeared, in the same issue an announcement of the sudden death of Edith Lowerre, the cause being given as heart failure.



Between Darkness and Dawn.*

BY FLORENCE OLMSTEAD.

IT was going to rain, the air was heavy and still, and the rumble of thunder in the west grew louder and more loud. Newton had just finished weeding his lettuce bed. He straightened up and looked about him. His horizon was shut in by the woods which came up to his place on all sides, yet the signs of the coming shower were not to be mistaken. A tree toad began to croak with pleasure and Newton's joyless face took on an expression of satisfaction as he glanced over his thirsty garden. He would not have to spend the afternoon drawing water from the well. He stood for a moment surveying his long rows of pinks and eschscholtzias, pansies and nasturtiums, growing in unbroken lines between the lettuce and tomato plants, and then went to get his hoe, for it would be well to loosen the earth in places before the rain.

When he had finished, what with the cloud and the setting of the sun, it was almost dark. Then he went into his great empty house to cook his evening meal, and the old setter got up stiffly from his post beneath the locust tree and followed him. By the time he had lit a fire the trees were bending before the wind and the rain cloud had swept upward. The first drops fell heavily upon the roof. Newton put on the kettle, then stopped and listened—he almost thought he heard a knock, a knock at his door! Who was there to knock at his door? The negroes fought shy of the place, and he had no other neighbors. It was the rain. Already it was coming down in a deluge. Then again the knock — it was at the front door. Holding his lamp on high, he went down the long hall, stepping cautiously over the rotting boards. With difficulty he turned the lock. As he did so the door was forced open from without and a woman stood in the flaring lamplight.

*Copyright, 1909, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved. The writer of this story received a cash prize of $100 in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending October 12, 1904.

"Oh," she cried, "won't you come and help me? I'm afraid he's dead."

"Where?" he asked wonderingly.

"Down there in the road. We were trying to make shelter before the rain caught us and something blew in front of his horse, and — Oh, please come on."

She caught him by the arm and he put down the lamp and followed her into the rain. She ran on ahead, breaking through a stretch of underbrush out into the dirt road. A few steps away a dark object lay quite still in the rain. As Newton came out of the wood he saw her on her knees beside it.

"Is he alive?" she cried as he bent beside her. Her voice was almost lost in the rush of the rain.

"I can't tell here," he answered.

Then somehow he got the man on to his back and they moved along to the house.

Not the front door, he could not mount those steps; it must be to the kitchen. How he reached it he did not know.

"Open the door," he called hoarsely, and the woman ran up the steps and opened the door, letting a flood of firelight flash out into the rain. Newton staggered and fell with his burden just inside the room. He lay still for a time, taking long, panting breaths. The woman was on her knees again by the other figure. The rain and the fall to the kitchen floor had brought the injured man to. He opened his eyes and said peevishly, "Stop that sniffling, Carrie, and get me a drink."

At this Newton got up and, going over to the cupboard, poured some whiskey into a cup and handed it to the woman.

"Help me up," said the man; "How can I get it down this way?"

The woman ran her arm under his head, but Newton stooped, and raising him, propped his back against the wall. As he did so the left arm swung limp and helpless by his side. The man gave a sharp cry of pain.

"Broken," said Newton.

"Confound you!" said the other, "don't be so rough."

He took the cup and began to gulp down the whiskey while the other looked at him with a certain curiosity.

He might have been sixty or more. His hair was white, his expression irritable, his figure portly. His clothes, notwithstanding their present condition, showed that he had been well dressed before the accident. Then he turned and looked at the girl. She too was watching the man as he drank the whiskey. Little streams of water trickled from her drenched riding skirt.

"Go over to the fire," he said, not unkindly, and he poured out another drink from the whiskey bottle.

"No, thank you," she said, "I don't need it."

"Take it," he commanded, "or you will have a chill."

Without a word she obeyed. Long strings of wet, yellow hair hung about her face, which was very white. She sank on a wooden chair by the fire and sat looking about her with occasional nervous shivers. The room, which was not a large one, was unceiled. The floor was bare. A cupboard stood well in the middle of the room. A pine table in front of the fire and a couple of chairs made up the rest of the furnishing. There were a great many rakes and hoes and bottles and books, a pot or two and some old newspapers lying about—the whole having an air of disorderly poverty. Then slowly her eyes turned to their host—a powerfully built man, possibly forty, it was hard to tell, for a heavy growth of dark beard almost covered his face; his nose was large and aquiline, and about his deep set eyes there was a look of brooding melancholy. He wore a blouse of some coarse stuff, his trousers were of homespun, and his feet were bare. It was a strange figure. As she looked at him he turned and met her glance.

"Can we stay here all night?" she asked.

"Don't be a fool, Carrie," said the old man on the floor. "Where else can we go?"

"There's nowhere else to go," said Newton, "and, if there were, your — he is in no condition to go on."

"My father," said the girl.

Newton nodded. "I'm going to set his arm," he said.

"No, you are not," the old man declared.

"Can you?" asked the girl.

He nodded with quiet assurance, and, taking up the light, went into an adjoining room. He was gone some time. When he came back he went to the man and knelt beside him. "See if you can

crawl into the other room," he said. "I've got a bed there and you will be more comfortable."

"I'll not let you set it."

"You may lose it if you don't."

"Lose it!" said the old man nervously. "What are you talking of? It'll hurt, won't it?"

Newton nodded.

"Think I'd better let him, Carrie?"

"Oh, yes, much better, if he will." The girl spoke eagerly.

"Well, you come in when he starts," and leaning on the other's arm he slowly made his way to the other room.

Through the open door the girl could see that it was cavernous and bare. She hung about the threshold for a moment, then turned and went back to drying herself by the fire until her father's call came from the other room.

He was established in a massive looking bed which occupied the centre of the room, and as she entered he beckoned her to him, giving a cautious glance at Newton, who seemed to be rummaging among some boxes in the corner.

"You think I can trust him?" he asked in a loud whisper? You think he's all there?" He touched his forehead.

Before she could answer Newton came up with the light. He set it on a chair by the bed, with the broken slats of a fruit basket and some strips of cloth.

"Now," he said.

The old man threw his daughter one agonized look.

"Are you sure——" she began hesitatingly, but already Newton had begun his work and her voice trailed off into silence.

Her father cried out. "Help me here," said Newton with a quick turn to her. He was very skilful — even her inexperienced eyes took in that. She lost her nervousness in watching him.

"Go into the other room," he said when it was over; "It will make him nervous to see you standing about."

"Can't I sit in here?"

"You'd better go and dry your clothes. He'll be all right in a little while."

She hesitated for a moment and then went back to the fire. From time to time she could hear the voices of the two men—her

father questioning, and the other answering in monosyllables. It may have been an hour before Newton came in.

"Is he asleep?" she asked.

He nodded and stooped over the fire. For a few moments neither spoke.

"What's in there?" said the girl at last, pointing to the kettle.

"Tea," he said, reaching for it.

"It's all boiled away."

"Why didn't you drink it before it boiled away?"

"I was afraid it might be——"

"What?" he asked dryly. "Living in the woods by myself doesn't prove that I am not a human being like the rest, does it? I don't brew poisons in a tea kettle."

"Of course not," said the girl hurriedly. "But I didn't know where to find the sugar," she added with sudden inspiration. "Could — could you make some more?"

Without answering he rinsed out the kettle and put on the fresh water, and then went to the cupboard and brought out cups, plates, a cake of corn bread, a dish of blackberries and a paper bag of sugar.

"It's boiling," said the girl; "don't you think you had better put in the tea?"

"It's in already," he answered, and preparations for the meal being completed he sat down by the fire and furtively watched the girl. She looked very slight in her dark habit. The warmth had brought a soft color to her face and the firelight shone on the blonde hair which lay on her neck in a loose, disordered coil.

"Do you know anything about nursing?" he asked at length.

She shook her head.

"I'll wait on him to-night then," he said. "Do you think you can make yourself comfortable in here? There are other rooms, but——"

"Oh, yes," she answered quickly; "but—will the lamp burn all night?"

"Yes. Are you afraid to be alone?"

"Not if I have a light. Do you live here all alone?" she asked hesitatingly.

"Yes." He spoke in a tone which forbade further inquiries.

Then, pouring out a cup of tea, he handed it to her and sat down again, at the same time pushing the bag of sugar towards her.

"Is there a spoon?" she asked, looking at the bag.

"I gave you one."

"Oh, yes," and she helped herself. "Aren't you going to have some? You must be dreadfully tired."

He made no answer.

"Please have some."

He hesitated — then filled his own cup.

"Can Father get back to town to-morrow?"

"Possibly; I can't tell yet."

"Are you a doctor?"

"I studied medicine once."

"But how will we ever get back to town? Goodness only knows where our horses have gone to."

"There's a trolley two miles over." He nodded toward the door.

"Can I have some blackberries?" Without waiting for his answer she helped a saucerful. "Those are for you," she said. "I'll eat mine out of the bowl."

He watched her for a moment and then got up. "I don't want any. I'm going in to stay with your father."

"You are not going!" she cried in dismay.

"Yes." He had crossed the room.

"Wait a minute. Oh, please wait! Is the outside door locked?"

"There's nothing in here to steal."

"But you must lock it."

"The key is gone."

"Then move the cupboard against it—please."

He did as she asked and started out again.

"Good night," said the girl.

"Good night."

"You'll leave that door open, won't you?"

"Yes."

"You'll come if I call?"

"There's nothing to hurt you."

The setter moved across the room to his master. "Oh, can't he stay in here?" she begged.

He turned and ordered the dog back and then went out. Then the girl went back to the fire, where, crouching by the dog, she sat listening to the wind, the rain and the rats. Finally her fears lost themselves in drowsiness and, leaning against the chimney, she slept.

. . . . . .

She awoke to look into two coals of fire glowing just before her. It was a moment before she realized that they were eyes—Newton's eyes—in his bearded face bending above her. He did not speak, and sudden terror parched her throat. Then as he gazed, the light died out, he straightened up and something dropped from his hand—it was a knife.

"I was going to kill you," he whispered.

"Why?" she asked faintly.

"Why? Why? Because you have her eyes, her hair, her smile. She is dead,—why should you live?"

Again his eyes flared up and he caught her by the wrist.

"Come," he said, "I will show you what no eyes but mine have looked on since she left."

"She drew back, but his grip tightened and he dragged her on toward the door.

"You are afraid of me," he cried. "She used to be sometimes. I would have killed her if I'd doubted her, and she knew it. But you, you — what have you to fear? A doll with a woman's eyes! Shut them; they drive me mad!"

At the door she struggled, but he pulled her through and into the darkness beyond. It must have been a passageway that they entered. He was almost carrying her now and it seemed to the girl that they passed over immeasurable distance. Then light broke through a doorway ahead. It had stopped raining, and watery moonlight fell through the shutterless windows. They were in a room, and it was not empty. Dark objects loomed out of the shadow,—chairs, tables,—a mirror caught the light, little ornaments one by one came into view. The wind, coming through a broken glass, rustled the dry leaves of a vine festooned along the wall. Its movements caught his eye.

"I put that there," he cried, "the day before she died, and she stood below me and laughed. Woman, can you laugh?"

"Laugh; let me hear it again!"

She trembled under his hands.

"You are a pitiful thing," he said. "Look into the glass and see what a woman should look like. But what's the use? I've looked there a thousand times—it won't show her—there's something the matter with it. By that window she sat and crooned the child to sleep, and then we'd sit and watch it lying on her knee. I wonder where that child is. Did it go to her? I had almost forgotten about that child."

He loosed his hold of the girl and stood in meditation. She moved softly and had almost gained the door when he missed her.

"Come back," he called, and again he held her fast. "So you want to leave her — to get back to your life, and your youth and your beauty — and leave her, and I say you shall not. You shall lie as stiff and cold as she did, your smile shall pass as hers did, your eyes shall glaze as hers did. You shall not have what she can not. I am going to kill——"

He did not finish. The old setter gave a low bark in the doorway and the next moment leapt upon his master. The words died on his lips, and he ran his hand over the dog's shaggy coat. His hold was loosed again, and again she moved toward the door. Then she stumbled against a chair.

"What's that?" said the man quickly, and his voice was as one who wakes from sleep. She made no answer and he stepped up to her and looked at her wonderingly in the half light.

"Mary!" he said softly. The dog whined. "Ah, you are only that woman who took refuge from the rain. Have I hurt you? Speak! Did I choke you? No, I remember, the dog kept me from it. The dog is the only living thing that's left. When it dies I'll go mad. It was your eyes that began it — your blue eyes. It is almost day, and if I can hold out till daylight I'll get you over to the trolley. Go back to the fire; I must find a horse."

He turned to go down the hall.

"Leave the dog," said the girl faintly.

The Bandit and the Baby.*

BY ARTHUR R. ANDRE.

IF every child born into the world were reared as he was rearing Bobby ; if the duties and obligations as well as the delights of parenthood were fully understood ; if the evils of unwise petting and indulgence, and the still greater evils of neglect and harshness, could be brought home to the minds of every thinking father and mother and guardian and teacher, what a millennium would be quickly ushered in ! . . . Some such thoughts as these were passing through Fenner's mind as he prepared the child for bed. The last refractory button of the little night drawers was securely fastened; the farewell kiss was given . . . "Good night, little man. Run upstairs to bed !" . . . Then the surprised look on the child's face caused him to look around. A man with a gun in his hand had quietly entered the room.

"Something to eat, please — bacon and eggs — anything." The intruder barely raised his voice as he preferred the request ; and as Fenner instinctively closed the door on the retreating child, he added meaningly :

"You know who I am."

Fenner knew. For a week past, the newspapers had spoken of little else — the man's sensational escape from jail ; his ingenuity in eluding his pursuers; the trail of grewsome murders in his wake. And Fenner knew, too, as indeed every one in the length and breadth of the State knew, for that matter, that the outlaw's method of covering up his tracks was to lie concealed during the day, and at night to issue forth from his hiding-place, to enter some lonely house and demand a meal, and in return for the hospitality extended to coolly murder its unresisting inmates. Fenner knew all this quite well, though he found it difficult to believe that the soft-spoken, refined-looking individual who stood before him

* Copyright, 1909, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

was the arch-criminal in question. Still, there wasn't any doubt of it, and he whistled softly to himself as he remembered that the house was completely surrounded by vacant lots, and that his own revolver was lying in the bureau drawer upstairs. Then, with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders, for he was a brave man, he turned his back on the outlaw, thrust a frying-pan upon the stove, and laid in it some strips of bacon. If, only, he could be reasonably certain that the child —

"What are you thinking about?" purred the assassin.

"My thoughts are my own," gritted Fenner.

"I thought, perhaps," the other replied, in the same even tone of voice, "that you were quite absorbed in your efforts at cookery." It is the last meal, I suppose you know, that you will ever prepare."

"Perhaps!" retorted Fenner. "And perhaps it is the last that you will ever eat." He turned the bacon over savagely with a fork and cracked two eggs into the pan beside it. His hands didn't tremble, nor did he look around, although he knew that the outlaw was watching him; that at the first suspicious move the man would shoot — and shoot straight. Mechanically, he measured a tablespoonful of coffee into the coffee-pot and poured boiling water over it. If he were to turn suddenly and throw the pot in the man's face —

"Don't try it," the other advised, reading his thoughts aright. "My last — er — entertainer tried that trick and failed," — and he laughed. Fenner said nothing. He spread the cloth and brought out bread and butter from the cupboard. Then he set the bacon and eggs on the table, poured out a cup of coffee, and retired to the other end of the room.

There must be something he could do, he told himself, as he dropped into a chair beside the stove — some means by which he could outwit the desperado. But the more he cudgeled his brains, the more he realized how completely he was in the other's power. The man had a gun — it lay beside him on the table — and his own was in the bureau drawer upstairs. Fenner had been in tight pinches before. More than once, in his cowboy days, he had had to fight his way against overwhelming odds to safety, but always there had been some slight element of chance in his favor. Here was none at all, and after some fifteen minutes of fruitless

effort his mind refused to grapple further with the problem. The outlaw was good-looking, he noticed ; there was nothing sinister or sensual in his appearance ; and he ate the food that was set before him, daintily and unhurriedly. The man's culture and education were self-evident ; but what had been his youthful training ? — his home life ? That was the point that interested Fenner, both as student and parent — and his thoughts flew off at a tangent to the child upstairs.

Bobby was seven, sturdy and straight as an arrow, and absolutely fearless. Never, his father reflected proudly, had the boy endured the indignity of a blow ; his mind was legend-free ; his will, unbroken. "I should do this," or, "I shouldn't do that if I were you," had been the only admonitions used to guide his steps aright . . . "Why, papa ?" . . . "Because people, and particularly 'grown-ups,' always do such things," or, "never," as the case might be. And Bobby counted the years till he should be grown up. Minor peccadilloes there were, of course, but Fenner never punished these as offenses against himself, always, as offenses against right living — against society. He was his son's friend and adviser, not his task-master ; and he lived over again in this sweet companionship the few short, blissful years of his married life. For the time being, the unwelcome visitor was forgotten ; memories of a cozy, vine-covered cottage and the little red building in which he had taught school till his wife died, rose in his mind. Then the outlaw made his presence known again by thrusting his coffee-cup across the table. Fenner refilled it and resumed his seat.

If only he could have had the training of the boy a few years more, what an object-lesson he could have given to the world ! One third of the children born were spoiled by foolish petting and indulgences ; another third, by unreflecting cruelty ; and the remainder, by a combination of the two — either their wills were enfeebled by these senseless practices, or they were altogether broken beyond repair. The principle he had employed — and employed successfully in the rearing of Bobby — was the extension of democracy to children — the recognition of the rights of children as against the supineness and encroachments of their parents. Self-government in the schools was a step in the same

direction. The uplifting of the backward races ; the granting of the suffrage to women ; modernism in the churches — all these things were phases of the one great, glorious, upward-leveling movement which was to regenerate the world — and carried away by the sublimity of the idea, he gazed with unconscious benignity at the desperado. The other watched him curiously.

" Come," said the man, and he pushed his cup aside and rose from the table. " We will go upstairs."

" What for ? " asked Fenner, aghast, a fear that he dared not formulate gnawing at his heart-strings.

The outlaw smiled. " The child — " he said.

" What of him ? " demanded Fenner, dry-lipped. And as he asked the question he could feel the sweat drops slowly gathering on his forehead.

The bandit shrugged his shoulders. " It doesn't pay," he said, to take any chances, particularly when a whole state is at one's heels. It is your two lives against mine."

" A mere baby ! " pleaded the father hopelessly. He failed to recognize his own voice, so strained and strange and far-away it sounded.

The other looked bored. " I could quote instances — " he began, smiling, then stopped, waiting for the father to lead the way.

Fenner hesitated. Then he rose slowly to his feet and picked up the lamp. Half-way up the stairs, which began at the entrance to the kitchen, was a turn and a landing. There he could whirl around suddenly and dash the lamp in the desperado's face.

" Set it down," the other commanded dryly.

Fenner affected not to hear, then with trembling fingers replaced the lamp upon the table.

" Come ! " said the bandit again, with the same evil smile on his face, and threw open the kitchen door.

Then the outraged father's wrath blazed out. " You bloody-minded spawn of hell," he taunted. " Did you think for one moment that I would lead you to my boy's bedside, so that you might cut his throat in cold blood ? That boy is worth a million of your worthless kind. Do you hear me, sir ? — a million ! You've got to shoot right here and now, and empty all six chambers,

you skulking, night-traveling jail-bird ; and as soon as you have, you'll turn tail and run. Once you have raised the neighborhood with your shooting, you won't be able to get out of here fast enough. Shoot, you cur! You never killed a man in a fair fight in your life."

"I shall count three," replied the other, impassively.

To some men it is given, when face to face with death, to live over again in memory a host of long-forgotten experiences. Not so with Fenner ; his thoughts were with the child upstairs. In imagination, he could see the youngster sitting up in bed, debating in his mind what he should do ; what a "grown-up" would do ; what he ought to do, with his own and his father's life in jeopardy.

"*One !*" cried the bandit.

In imagination, he could see the child slip noiselessly from between the sheets and steal into the adjoining room to abstract the weapon from the bureau drawer. Then he could see him tiptoeing down the stairs and seating himself on the third or fourth step from the bottom. Fenner could see these things quite plainly, in his mind's eye — and at the same time he was calculating that if the murderer should miss his aim or only wound him slightly he could clear the space between them at a bound. On the table, in the centre of the room, but sufficiently to one side to leave a pathway clear, was a knife — a bread knife, with a stout haft and a keen blade —

"*Two !*" — and the outlaw raised and sighted his revolver.

Like a runner awaiting the signal to be off, Fenner bent forward, swaying his body from side to side to disconcert the other's aim. Should he leap now ? or wait till the first shot was fired ? — and, again, into his mind there stole a vision of his boy, on the stairs that faced the kitchen door, the revolver resting in the cleft of his knees, the while his baby fingers fumbled with the trigger. Then the door was opened, and the scene within revealed to the waiting child. He didn't cry out, or turn and flee — instead, his fingers tugged the more desperately at the lever. Fenner could see him, bent almost double, his little brows down-drawn, his mouth a tiny rosebud of determination. How like his mother the little rogue had grown to be! With the outlaw posing unconsciously in the open door, if only he had the strength to pull the

trigger, he couldn't miss. . . . The vision passed, and in place of it appeared his own obituary — the double-leaded headlines of the next day's paper . . . Dan Killian — desperado, scores another victim. Henry Fenner, retired rancher and educator, of Vacaville, slain in his own home. His baby — . . . What wouldn't he have given, he murmured absently, for the chance to rear such a child to man's estate ? . . . The man was going to shoot.

" Three ! "

A spurt of flame leaped out through the open door, and the bandit straightened up, then spun around, a red stain dying his bosom as he groped about him for support, the revolver slipping from his nerveless grasp. Fenner gazed at the falling man, transfixed, his mind refusing to credit the evidence of his senses. Then in a flash he understood.

" Bobby ! " he exulted. *" Bobby ! "*

And, a moment later, a little half-laughing, half-crying white-clad figure pattered across the kitchen floor, past the grewsome thing that stared so impotently up at them, and leaped into his arms.